

REMARKS

The Specification was objected to and has been amended to address the items raised by the Examiner.

The Drawing was objected to and has been amended to address the items raised by the Examiner.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-4, 10-13, and 15-19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,238,368 to Ortolano (Ortolano hereinafter) in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,315,641 to Mosser (Mosser hereinafter).

With respect to Ortolano, the Examiner properly points out that Applicant's claims 1 and 10 include the feature, "An overcover coupled to a second surface opposite a first surface of a respective cover portion," which is a feature not disclosed in Ortolano. However, Examiner asserts that Mosser does disclose an overcover for the purpose of connecting blades, and that in light of Mosser, it would be obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art to modify the tenon of Ortolano to associate with the overcover of Mosser.

Applicant points out in Ortolano that the "rivet 13 (tenon) affixes the band 10 to each of the blades 12," in column 2, lines 43-44, but the disclosure in no way suggests that this rivet 13 may be employed to associate with a structure other than this band 10, such as an overcover, and thus, there is no suggestion of a means of association with an overcover. Applicant also points out, that while Mosser discloses a tie band 16 that is associated with a shroud element 15 (cover portion) and integrates turbine blading, this tie band 16 is taught to, as Examiner points out, "minimize vibratory stresses." The tie band 16 is not suggested for sealing blade tips against leakage facing sides for adjacent cover portions of adjacent blades. As the name implies, it does nothing more than "tie" blades together, and is not an overcover as Applicant claims at all. An overcover that is associated with a cover portion to connect blades and "seal against leakage" is a feature of Applicant's claims, and this sealing is a feature that is not taught by either Ortolano or Mosser. In fact, by teaching a tie band 16 that's purpose is to "minimize vibratory stresses," Mosser actually teaches away from Applicant's overcover that will "seal against leakage."

There is no suggestion in Ortolano of an overcover, association of the rivet 13 with any thing other than the band 10, or modification of the rivet to associate any thing other than the band 10, and no suggestion in Ortolano or Mosser of an overcover or, in particular, an overcover that seals against leakage. For at least the forgoing reasons, all the features of Applicant's claims 1 and 10 are not taught or suggested. Since claims 2-4 depend from claim 1, and since claims 12-13 and 15-19 depend from claim 10, all features of these claims are also not taught or suggested. It is noted however, that Applicant reserves the right to separately argue patentability of the limitations in the dependant claims.

Claims 5-9 and 14 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ortolano in view of Mosser in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,575,911 to Laszlo (hereinafter Laszlo). Referring to Laszlo, Applicant points out (Fig. 3 and column 3, lines 41-43) that the stripstock 22 (which the Examiner equates with an overcover) is not actually affixed to the mounting band 12 to secure blades together, but instead, is used to simply supply washers 24 that are punched from the stripstock 22 onto the band 12. The washers 24 are punched and affixed to the tang 20 and band 12 in a manner that connects the band 12 to the blades 14, wherein the stripstock 22 is discarded after the washers 24 have been removed/punched therefrom. Thus, Laszlo does not suggest an overcover that can be welded to the blade cover portions, nor does it suggest an overcover at all.

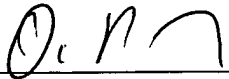
Applicant respectfully asserts that all of the rejections are herein overcome. No new matter is added by way of the present Amendments or Remarks, as support is found throughout the original filed specification, claims, and drawings. Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any questions regarding the instantly submitted response, Applicant's attorney respectfully requests the courtesy of a telephone conference to discuss any matters in need of attention.

If there are any additional charges with respect to this response or otherwise, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 06-1130 maintained by Applicants' attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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